

VZCZCXRO4042
PP RUEHPW
DE RUEHGV #0775/01 2601546
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 161546Z SEP 08
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7172
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5160
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0341
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3034
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 5728
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 0159
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 4319
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2823
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 000775

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AF](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [IR](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PK](#) [PREF](#)

SUBJECT: UNHCR:HC GUTERRES ON AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, IRAN

Summary

11. (SBU) UNHCR High Commissioner Guterres painted a grim picture of the situation in Northwestern Pakistan during a briefing to key donors. Describing the situation there as the most worrisome in the world at the moment, he called on the International Community to support both the current government in Islamabad and efforts to provide assistance to Pakistanis (as well as Afghan refugees) in refugee-affected areas. On Afghanistan, Guterres said that the security situation and the government's low capacity to provide services preclude any dramatic increase in returns of refugees for the time being. He hopes the November 19 Conference on Afghan Refugees will focus on the need for providing services to returnees at the local level. Guterres described his discussions in Teheran as very difficult, but leaving an opening to come to agreement on the treatment of Afghan refugees in Iran. In an aside to the Charge after the briefing, Guterres stated that we need to take a more sophisticated approach towards Teheran. End Summary.

Pakistan: Grave Concerns about Stability

12. (SBU) The Charge and RMA Counselor attended a September 15 briefing at the Dutch embassy by High Commissioner Guterres on his recent trip to Pakistan and Iran, as well as on the November 19 conference on Afghan refugees to be hosted by UNHCR and the Afghan government. Guterres went on at length about his concerns regarding the overall political/security situation in the Northwest Frontier Province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and to a certain extent the adjacent Afghan regions. Militias are operating independently and have access to drug money, local populations are disaffected with the government, local services are overwhelmed and/or dysfunctional, he stated. He called this situation currently the most worrisome in the world. Guterres called on the International Community to look at it from a perspective broader than the problems associated with Afghanistan, as the potential chaos is considerable and would have broad impact in the region. Guterres believes the current leadership in Pakistan has good intentions, but does not necessarily enjoy the full support of the entire bureaucracy, including the military. Therefore, while the leadership seems to grasp the

seriousness of the situation and wants to re-establish control of these regions, the government is also fragile and it is unclear how effective it can be. Guterres called for concerted international action to support the GOP, as well as Pakistanis affected by conflict. The UN will launch a 5-year consolidated appeal for \$135 (of which \$45m for UNHCR) for the refugee-impacted areas of Pakistan. UNDP will be responsible for a larger amount, as the approach will focus on development for both Pakistanis and the refugee population.

Afghan Refugee Conference

13. (SBU) Guterres began by stating that the expectations a few years ago that most of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran would soon return home are no longer realistic because of both the security situation in Afghanistan and the government's limited capacity to support returnees. Of the 360,000 who returned in 2007, 12 percent had nowhere to return to and the government was essentially unable to provide support. Guterres hopes that the November conference will expose the need for community development and service in areas of return, with a focus on organizing local services that can deliver. Through this focus, he hopes both Kabul and donors will come to terms with the groundwork that needs to be laid for future refugee returns and that Iran and Pakistan will understand that the numbers of Afghan refugees in their countries will not be diminishing dramatically for the time being, lest they overwhelm Afghanistan's capacity to receive them.

GENEVA 00000775 002 OF 002

Iran: Need for a More Sophisticated Approach

14. (SBU) Guterres described Iran as difficult and always ready to blame the West for every problem. Nonetheless, he believes that the International Community (including UNHCR) needs to do more to address the refugee problems there through increased engagement with Teheran. There are huge flows of Afghans continuing to come from the west and the north of Afghanistan into Iran. The government in Teheran is committed to non-refoulement, Guterres said, but also does not want refugees settling in certain areas (No Go Areas), where there are some legitimate concerns about security and the already poor situation of Iranians living there. He believes that the government wishes to provide basic protection to refugees, but will expect increased international support in exchange. He described discussions with the GOI during his visit as very difficult, though he believed there is room for negotiations. Guterres said that Teheran consistently complained about how small UNHCR's program was in Iran compared to Pakistan. In response, Guterres said that a larger program would require concessions by Teheran on issues such as freedom of movement and greater independence of action. He reported that UNHCR will continue discussions with Iran, as there is a need to engage before the situation deteriorates for the refugees and other migrants there.

15. (SBU) In a pull-aside after the briefing, Guterres stressed to the Charge the need to adopt a more sophisticated approach toward Teheran. He admitted that the GOI can be difficult and may be involved in some nefarious activities, but it is the most sophisticated government in the area with a strategy for refugees, for its own country and for what it sees as its role in the region. The Iranians leave room for negotiation in most everything they do and we all need to be more nuanced in taking advantage of that, he said.

STORELLA